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SUBJECT: CODEL JACKSON-LEE'S MEETING WITH SUDANESE FOREIGN
MINISTER LAM AKOL

¶1. (SBU) Summary: During an August 28 courtesy call, Codel Jackson-Lee briefed Sudanese Foreign Minister Lam Akol on their visit to Darfur. The delegation also urged the expeditious implementation of UNSCR 1769, full implementation of the CPA, unfettered access for humanitarian NGOs, expedited clearance of materials needed for the construction of the New Embassy Compound, and asked Lam Akol to intervene in the recent expulsion of CARE Director Paul Barker. Lam Akol stated that the GNU is committed to implementing 1769, charged that USG actions contribute to NEC delays, and was not encouraging on the Barker expulsion. He also suggested that claims that 7,000 abductees from the North-South civil war remain unaccounted for are exaggerated. End summary.

¶2. (U) At the conclusion of their two-day visit to Sudan on August 28, Codel Jackson-Lee paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Lam Akol. The Codel was led by Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX), and included Congressmen Steve Chabot (R-OH) and Adrian Smith (R-NE), along with Staffer Genel Brown and military escort Major Gerald Thomas. They were accompanied by Charge Powers and Embassy notetaker.

Darfur

¶3. (SBU) Congresswoman Jackson-Lee reported to Foreign Minister Lam Akol that the Delegation had just completed a very worthwhile visit to El Fashir, where they had met with orh Darfur Wali Osman Mohammed Yousif Kibir, UN officials, newly arrived AMIS Field Commander Martin Luther Agwei, and visited the El Shouk IDP camp. She attested that the camp residents have organized themselves and know what they want. The Codel appreciated the meeting with the Wali, with whom they agreed with some issues and agreed to disagree on others.

¶4. (SBU) Lam Akol briefly reviewed the history and the issues involved in resolving the Darfur conflict, starting with the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement, and said that the challenge now is building on UNSCR 1769. He asserted that the critical problem is lack of unity among the Darfur rebels. Abdul Wahid is the missing component of the peace process. Lam Akol warned that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM) is in danger of becoming a victim of Darfur. With its attention focused on Darfur, the international community incorrectly takes North-South peace for granted.

Implementing UNSCR 1769

¶5. (SBU) Ms. Jackson-Lee expressed the hope that UNSCR 1769 implementation would advance quickly and that Sudan will take the initiative to expedite it. She noted that in the Codel,s meeting earlier that day with AMIS Force Commander Agwei, he had strongly endorsed rapid implementation of 1769 and the deployment of additional peacekeepers under UN command that goes with it. Jackson-Lee noted especially the need to promptly transfer to the new UN-AU peacekeeping force the land required to support its infrastructure. She hoped that the GNU would help speed such transfers.

¶6. (SBU) Lam Akol stated that the GoS has taken steps to establish a flexible planning process for the necessary land transfer to the peacekeeping force, forming both political and technical committees. Now that the mechanism is in place, Sudan is waiting for specific applications for land transfers on which to act.

Comprehensive Peace Agreement

¶7. (SBU) Jackson-Lee emphasized the importance of the full implementation of the CPA, noting that it can provide a framework for ending the conflict in Darfur, as well as North-South peace. She suggested that an international conference might assist in moving the CPA forward. She also urged the GNU to show flexibility in resolving the dispute over the Abyei region,s border.

¶8. (SBU) Lam Akol explained the current obstacle in implementing the CPA is the redeployment of SAF and SPLA forces to their respective sides of line 1156, due to conflicting interpretations of boundary demarcation. The slow disbursement of international assistance via the

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Multi-Donor Trust Fund also has deprived the South of a tangible peace dividend expected from the CPA. He noted that the Abyei border dispute is not one on which the GNU could take a position, but rather a disagreement between the NCP and SPLM within the GNU, that must be resolved by the two parties.

Humanitarian Access

¶9. (SBU) The Congresswoman noted the great work being done in Sudan by international humanitarian NGOs. She hoped that the GoS will work with the High-Level Committee formed to promote humanitarian access to ease the NGOs ability to operate unhindered.

New Embassy Compound

¶10. (SBU) Jackson-Lee raised the difficulties being experienced in clearing through the Port of Sudan the materials needed for the construction of the New Embassy Compound (NEC) in Khartoum. She noted that completion of the NEC is in the interest of both countries and would be a step toward normalizing bilateral relations. She urged Lam Akol to try to assist in speeding the processing of the needed containers into Sudan.

¶11. (SBU) Lam-Akol countered that the responsibility for the delays lies largely with the USG, which he asserted has taken &retrogressive8 actions that are hindering improved relations between the two countries, and to which the delays in approving NEC shipments are a response.

Expulsion of CARE Director Barker

¶12. (SBU) Jackson-Lee raised the August 25 order expelling from Sudan Amcit CARE Director Paul Barker. She cautioned that Barker,s expulsion sends the wrong message to the world community. Given that the deadline for Barker,s departure was that very night, she understood the impossibility of reversing the decision in time to allow him to stay. However, she urged the Foreign Minister to intervene with the relevant GNU agencies to allow him to return as quickly as possible.

¶13. (SBU) Lam-Akol denied that Barker had been &expelled8 from Sudan, arguing that, rather, Barker,s residence permit had expired and had simply not been renewed. He noted that this is not an MFA area of responsibility and he could not promise that it would be satisfactorily resolved. Congressman Chabot emphasized that Barker,s forced absence from Sudan would be viewed very negatively in the United States and elsewhere. The longer Barker was unable to return, the longer the issue would fester. Chabot urged that Sudan resolve the problem promptly.

Charges of Forced Abduction Exaggerated?

¶14. (SBU) Congressman Chabot queried the veracity of allegations that 7,000 Southerners abducted during the civil war remain unaccounted for and may still be being held against their will. He asked what could be done to identify and repatriate them. Lam-Akol downplayed the extent of any such problems, saying that such allegations are frequently made in wartime and often are exaggerated. He also asserted that it is a traditional practice to adopt such abductees into the society of their captors, suggesting that any unrepatriated abductees likely are remaining of their own free will.

¶15. (U) Codel Jackson-Lee did not have an opportunity to review this message before transmission.
FERNANDEZ